

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: July 10, 2014

Agenda Item: Nongame Tax Check-Off Project Proposals

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

Under the provisions of 87-5-122, MCA, the Fish & Wildlife Commission “shall review and annually approve the nongame wildlife program’s projects recommended by the Department for funding from the nongame wildlife account. The Commission shall provide for public comment during the review and approval process.” While final 2013 tax year donations are unknown at this time, the average received by FWP from the 2004-2012 tax years was \$27,000/year. (As of March 31, 2014, \$19,500 had been donated for tax year 2013, which is average for this time of year.) FWP is proposing the following work in FY15 with this anticipated funding in addition to some balance in the fund from previous years:

\$30,000	Inventory, monitoring and conservation work on Montana Species of Concern and species in need of inventory as determined through a formal ranking process.
\$10,000	Prioritize habitat for conservation including: 1) identifying the most critical habitat needs for nongame, threatened or endangered species, 2) identifying and monitoring threats to these critical habitats.
\$5,000	Competitive student stipend for nongame research.
\$3,000	Contribution to ongoing Sylvatic Plague Vaccine research in Montana for black-footed ferret recovery.
\$2,000	Education and outreach efforts to promote nongame wildlife appreciation and conservation.

Public Involvement & Results

The public comment window ran through Monday, June 23 with comments received forwarded to the Commission.

Alternatives and Analysis

The recommended work addresses several components of FWP’s overall nongame management program (including threatened and endangered species management), as identified in the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Tax check-off funding is used in conjunction with State Wildlife Grants to address high priority habitat, survey and inventory, and species conservation needs. Alternatives could include allocating more or less among these categories.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the F&W Commission endorse the proposed work for funding with nongame tax check-off funds. This recommendation represents no change from the initial Commission adoption in May.

Proposed Motion

Move that the F&W Commission approve as final the proposed Nongame Tax Check-Off work for Fiscal Year 2015 as presented by FWP.